

Supporting Delaware growers to meet third party food safety trends

DOVER, Del. – Delaware fruit and vegetable growers can now receive financial support in obtaining a third party audit to verify they are following effective food safety practices. The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) is extending its Food Safety Audit Cost-Share Program for growers to include any third party food safety audit, not just USDA Harmonized GAP audits. With an additional \$20,000 for farmers to use to offset required audit costs, DDA wants to make sure that producers are prepared for the Food Safety Modernization Act and the Produce Safety Rule.

“Throughout the past two years, we have found fewer buyers requesting produce growers to participate in the Harmonized GAP audits that USDA provides,” said Andrea Jackson, DDA Food Products Inspection Administrator. “More farmers are being required to participate in audits such as Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) schemes. Any of these audits are important in helping farmers recognize preventative measures for food safety. So we want to be more inclusive of these third party audits in our cost-share program.”

Food safety audits verify that fruit and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. The Delaware Department of Agriculture’s Food Products Inspection Section will pay 80 percent of the cost of a USDA AMS or commercial third party food safety audit with a maximum reimbursement of \$1,000 per year. In order to be eligible, producers must successfully complete a third party USDA AMS or commercial audit this year, prior to September 29, 2017.

Funding will be provided on a first come, first serve basis, but Delaware growers must fully complete the necessary [application and forms](#), be able to show verification of successful audit completion, billing, and proof of payment for the audit. For questions regarding the Food Safety Audit Cost-Share Program, contact Andrea Jackson at (302) 698-4545 or via email at Andrea.Jackson@delaware.gov.

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